Streams of William James

The Newsletter of William James Society
Volume 3 • Issue 1 • Spring 2001

Streams of William James

The Newsletter of William James Society
Volume 3 • Issue 1 • Spring 2001

Randall H. Albright, Editor = albright@world.std.com

www.pragmatism.org/societies/william_james.htm

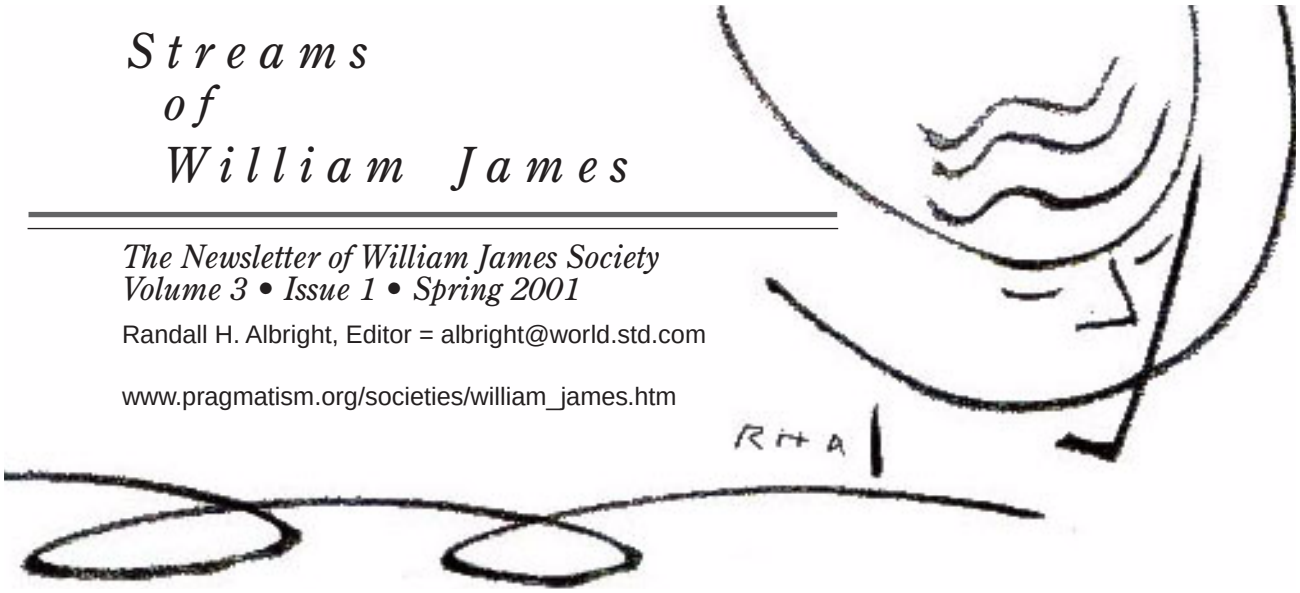


Table of Contents

WJ, as noted by some who knew him

'William expressed himself and his environment to perfection when he replied to my question about his house at Chocorua, "Oh, it's the most delightful house you ever saw; has 14 doors all opening outside." His brain isn't limited to 14, perhaps unfortunately.'

—Alice James, December 14, 1889 diary entry, *The Diary of Alice James* (1934) [Penguin 1982 edition], p. 67-8

"His excursions into philosophy were accordingly in the nature of raids, and it is easy for those who are attracted by one part of his work to ignore other parts, in themselves perhaps more valuable.... [*The Principles of Psychology*] is a work of imagination; and the subject as he conceived it, which is the flux of immediate experience in men in general, requires imagination to read it at all. It is a literary subject, like autobiography or psychological fiction, and can be treated only poetically; and in this sense Shakespeare is a better psychologist than Locke or Kant. Yet this gift of imagination is not merely literary; it is not useless in divining the truths of science, and it is invaluable in throwing off prejudice and scientific shams. The fresh imagination and vitality of William James led him to break through many a false convention."

—George Santayana, "William James" in *Character and Opinion in the United States* (1920); reprinted in *William James Remembered*, Linda Simon, ed. (U Nebraska, 1996), p. 93

c/o Randall Albright • 423 Marlborough Street • Boston, MA 02115 • USA

Published by the Philosophy Department • 308 Hanner Hall • Oklahoma State University • Stillwater, OK 74078-5064 • USA

http://www.pragmatism.org/societies/william_james.htm

Streams of William James is the newsletter of William James Society, a non-profit organization sponsored by Randall Albright and an Advisory Board.

Crosscurrents and Side-Eddies:
A 'Less Obvious Escape' from the Problem of (In-)Curable Evil

by Kipton E. Jensen

In an 1884 address to Harvard Divinity students, published as the "Dilemma of Determinism," James referred to a prevailing opinion that the juice had been pressed out of most philosophical controversies ages ago and that no new champion could do much more than warm up stale arguments that everyone had heard[1]; this opinion, he said, was a radical mistake. I agree. But even if it were true that the juice had long ago been pressed out of most philosophical controversies, surely there are other reasons -- perhaps sufficient -- for rehearsing those stale arguments. Perhaps each new generation of philosophical thinkers is obliged to press new juice into old controversies.[2] The following essay is an attempt, à la James, to press a little more juice into the problem of evil.

In his so-called anti-theological writings,[3] Hegel complained that the Christian religion renounced rationality unnecessarily, that it sent away empty "fancy, heart, and sensibility," that it was isolationistic, and -- if that were not enough -- that it was gloomy. Like Professor Westphal, I think that Christians have a good deal to learn from the atheist critiques of religion.[4] I imagine that Hegel would have approved, at least in general, of James's variety of religious philosophy. I will assume from the outset, therefore, in deference to Hegel, as well as James, that an adequate rehearsal of and escape from the problem of evil would fire the imagination, fulfill the demands of both the head and heart, and placate the oft forgotten human need for prankishness.

I. James and the "Most Obvious Escape" from the Problem of Evil.

James discusses curable and incurable forms of evil in his *Varieties of Religious Experience*.[5] Whereas curable evil is simply a maladjustment of persons with things, i.e. "a wrong correspondence of one's life with one's environment" (VRE: 134), incurable evil is something more radical and general; rather than the relation of the subject to outer things, incurable evil consists in a wrongness or vice in the subject's essential nature – this form of evil, says James, requires "a supernatural remedy." Systematic healthy-mindedness, as he calls it, or the "mind-cure gospel," which posits good "as the essential and universal aspect of being, deliberately excludes evil from its field of vision" (VRE: 88). James distinguishes the philosophers of religion, who profess to give a quasi-logical explanation for the existence of evil, from the mind-curers who find no need for speculative explanations (VRE: 106); and James divides the philosophers of religion into monotheists and polytheists:

> [In polytheism,] God is not necessarily responsible for the existence of evil; he would only be responsible if it were not finally overcome. But on the monistic or pantheistic view, evil, like everything else, must have its foundation in God; and the difficulty is to see how this can possibly be the case if God is absolutely good. This difficulty faces us in every form of philosophy in which the world appears as one flawless unit of fact (VRE: 131).

James believes that this monistic assumption, if admitted, implies a difficulty that has always been burdensome to the philosophies of religion. And while it is sometimes difficult to determine whether James belongs to the philosophers of religion or to the mind-curers here, he is quite clear in his allegiance to "pluralism." [Perhaps he is committed to the pluralistic assumption because of his interest in systematic healthy-mindedness. That said, James suggests that "healthy-mindedness is inadequate as a philosophical doctrine; the evil facts which it refuses positively to account for are a genuine portion of reality" (VRE: 140).] The "only *obvious* escape here," writes James, "is to cut loose from the monistic assumption altogether, and allow the world to have existed from its origin in pluralistic form..." (VRE: 163). I want to suggest a less obvious escape, one which retains the monistic assumption and at the same time fulfills the requirements of healthy-mindedness – namely, transforming incurable into curable evil.

II. Parlor games and Noble Lies.

Perhaps the sudden disappearance of various creative and thought-provoking social activities, common in

---

1. See *The Works of William James – The Will to Believe*, ed. Frederick Burkhardt (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979 [1884], 114.

2. According to C.S. Peirce, thought is the process by which we solve problems (irritating states of mind); when we solve the problem, thought ends and we are restored to a state of belief (a state of mental rest)-- no problem, no thought. It is one of the central tasks of the philosopher, therefore, to remind us of the problems out of which our inherited worldview sprang. Without a certain familiarity with the problem to which the answer is directed, the answer will seem to us either superficial or altogether unnecessary. Odd as it may sound, perhaps each philosopher is obliged to reinvent the wheel.

3. See especially his *Religion ist eine*; for an extended treatment of this period and these canons, see Harris' *Hegel's Development*, Ch. III, especially Section 6. These early essays were dubbed "anti-theological" by Kaufmann in his *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*.

4. This is the central thesis of his *Suspicion & Faith: The Religious Uses of Modern Atheism*, Eerdman: Grand Rapids, 1993.

5. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902), Penguin Paperback Edition: New York, 1982; hereafter, e.g., VRE: 134.

the Nineteenth century, e.g. parlor games, is partially responsible for (or at least symptomatic of) the demise of the Christian world view and the rise of nihilism -- i.e. for transforming sacred forests into felled and rotting timber. One finds numerous examples of parlor games in Nineteenth century literature. Dostoevsky suggests one such example, surely fictional but highly illustrative, in his *Brothers Karamozov*: It was decided by one of the characters, either a sadist or a masochist (does this exhaust the cast of characters in his novel?), that each of the guests confess, publicly and with exacting honesty, his or her most pernicious sin. It is not surprising, I suppose, that Dostoevsky's version of a parlor game reflects his sustained interest in the role of confession in redemption. It should also come as no surprise that the party was a bust. In what follows, I want to suggest a slightly different – though perhaps equally telling – parlor game: What if we were permitted, yes, encouraged even, to tell noble lies?

Noble lies have a long history; indeed, one could conceivably construe political history as the incremental deterioration of the nobility belonging to the various lies told. Almost everyone has at least some familiarity with Plato's use of noble lies in the *Republic*: "It seems likely," says Socrates, "that our rulers will have to make considerable use of falsehood and deception for the benefit of their subjects. We said, I believe, that the use of that sort of thing was in the category of medicine" (459d). The philosophical laboratory rattles and hums with thought experiments. Like all laboratory experiments, certain aspects of a complex phenomenon are isolated and observed under fixed – and very often exaggerated – conditions. If we conduct our inquiries properly, we learn something about objective reality. (This is how I tend to read utopian and dystopian literature from Plato to Rawls.) According to Peirce, who James credited with the origins of pragmatism, the meaning of a concept is expressed completely in terms of experimental prescriptions. To understand the meaning of a concept, e.g. hardness, is to define the experimental conditions under which hardness announces itself. Thought experiments, the category to which nobles lies belong, are a means of manipulating the conditions under which an organism behaves. To articulate a noble lie is to explore the psychological conditions requisite to a particular mode of conduct; perhaps noble lies could be viewed, albeit circuitously, as a philosophical method for making our ideas clear.

III. Curable and Incurable Evil.

Briefly stated, the philosophical problem of evil is the difficulty of squaring the "fact of suffering" with the traditional attributes of God -- viz. omnibenevolence, omnipotence, and omniscience. It is the first objection to Thomas' "Five Ways." There are, of course, a number of alleged solutions to this problem; the most popular response is that the malicious equation fails to take into account the role of human freedom -- i.e. it is *we* and *not God* who are responsible for the suffering of little children. So that we might genuinely love God, the best of all possible worlds, it is necessary that our love and obedience spring from free choice; the alternative, that we act as automatons, is -- so the friends of this line of reasoning argue -- meaningless. So while God would have preferred that we choose the way of obedience and blessedness, a world in which the children would be spared, He limited Himself (or at least His omnipotence -- i.e. God creates a rock that He can't, or at least refuses to, lift) in order that we might choose freely; unfortunately, and language fails to express the disappointment here, we were and continue to be disobedient. And where there is choice, there is also consequence; the consequence of our pride is suffering, not only and perhaps not at all our own suffering. But while this makes God only *indirectly* responsible for evil, it does nothing for the suffering of little children (this is, I take it, the upshot of Dostoevsky's "The Grand Inquisitor"). The "freewill defense" is an attempt to affirm each of the four propositions which, taken together, constitute the problem. Perhaps the "freewill explanation" merely exchanges one problem for another; but perhaps this exchange is significant -- perhaps it gets us thinking in the right direction.

Another solution, one which on first blush seems a bit far-fetched and on closer examination absolutely pernicious, consists in denying the so-called "fact of suffering" altogether. Perhaps one would not be stretching the truth of the matter too far to say that the driving force behind most religious sentiment, from the Buddhist doctrine to Schopenhauerian pessimism, is universal suffering; the four holy truths --the formulation of universal suffering, the origin of suffering, the overcoming of suffering, and the way leading to the suppression of suffering-- are the inspirational economy of the famous "Sermon at Benares." In the 19th century, Schleiermacher claimed that religious sentiment is ultimately reducible to the feelings of dependence on the one hand and deliverance on the other.[6] Though perhaps less so than Buddhism, the problem of suffering is central to the inspirational economy the Judeo-Christian model.

But can one really deny the existence of suffering?[7] In general, religious thinkers tend to contrast this world --

---

6. To this characterization of religious consciousness, Hegel quips: If this is all there is to it, the dog is an exemplary Christian -- after all, a dog is constantly aware of his dependence on a master and experiences a feeling of deliverance every time the master throws him a bone.

7. Augustine initially answered the problem of evil by denying the existence of evil -- it was instead a privation of that which truly is. Another possibility, found in Franklin's "Dissertation," is the view that pleasure is nothing other than the absence of pain (a view strikingly similar to the one Freud uses in his *Civilization and its Discontents*) and thus death, which ends all pain, is a pleasurable experience -- indeed, the degree of pleasure is directly proportionate to the degree of pain experienced in life; the point of this, then, is that each person receives at death perfect compensation for pain. As an aside, Franklin thought that this argument undermines the moral argument for an afterlife.

a world shot through with becoming-- with a "truer world" which lay beyond this one, i.e. a world characterized by being rather that becoming.[8] This Weltanschauung can be traced back, at the very least, to Plato; according to the ancient theory of the forms, reality is characterized by stability and illusion is characterized by change -- after all, if something is beautiful in one moment and not-beautiful in the next, there is something illusory about it. Suffering, and joy for that matter, is --on this view-- something which takes place in the world of becoming; philosophical consciousness, on the contrary, is directed at the unchanging ontological furniture of being (concepts, universals, or forms).

Though the divine rationale is beyond our present stretch of comprehension, most believers imply by their behavior and attitudes that this world is "less than real" when they comfort themselves by believing that suffering is --from the divine perspective-- explicable without remainder (if not altogether justifiable); i.e. though it seems odious to us now, we'll eventually understand that suffering was necessary to the grander purposes of existence.[9] In his Essay on Man, Epistle IV: 111-114, Pope puts it like this:

> What makes all physical or moral ill?
> There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.
> God sends not ill; if rightly understood,
> Or partial Ill is universal Good.

But to tell the truth, this seems -- to most of us -- absolutely preposterous. I cannot understand, even remotely, how God might sanction the suffering of an innocent child (i.e. "a partial ill") for the sake of some universal Good. Granting from the outset that our sense of justice pales in comparison to divine justice, that our moral sensibilities are opaquely analogical, this answer is baffling at best.

One variation on this distinction between being and becoming is solipsism. According to Berkeley, what the knower knows is not an object in the world but rather a representation in the mind – a representation which we take to correspond to an object in the world; what exists for us is what we perceive. As far as I *know*, I am the only individual who really exists; all that I perceive is, conceivably, placed there by a clever divinity who --in order to determine my moral worth-- provides the impression that there are individuals suffering and then observes how I respond to that perceived reality. This is a comforting possibility. To the extent that this life is little more than a moral testing ground, why couldn't God test my worth and avoid the *actual* suffering of *actual* individuals by simply programming me to perceive *as actual* the illusion of suffering? Perhaps, occasionally, I will need to suffer *just enough* to make the deception believable. For God, we might suppose, all things are possible -- even a happy deception! Perhaps there are countless minds in a vat, each of which is programmed in a similar way; if so, the return of the Savior --ushering in the kingdom of God-- is really simply a matter of God de-programming us and, should we fail to pass the moral test, reprogramming us until each of us learn the moral lesson. Ah, bliss -- disciplinary reincarnation. Unfortunately, this solution (i.e. the solipsistic model) is difficult to sustain; according to John Atwell, adopting theoretical egoism

> is not only mad; it is, in Schopenhauer's opinion, evil. Theoretical egoism entails practical egoism, according to which 'a man regards and treats only his own person as a real person, and all others as mere phantoms,' and that doctrine, Schopenhauer holds, expresses the fundamental stance of an evil man.[10]

So the problem of evil eventually works its way to the surface and becomes a problem again; perhaps to solve the problem is itself morally pernicious. If the denial of the fact of suffering won't work as a sustained solution to the problem of evil, it would seem that a more satisfactory solution stands or falls with the denial of one of the remaining premises – viz. omnibenevolence or omniscience. The failure of the solipsistic solution is what led me to the idea of a noble lie and the parlor game that ushers in the kingdom of God.

IV. Ushering in the Kingdom of God: A Less Obvious Escape.

Recall that section of the *Confessions* in which Augustine discusses the death of his mother; grief stricken, Augustine asks himself why his mother, Monica, fails to comfort him in his time of need. Augustine supposes that there are but two possible explanations: either she knows or she doesn't, and if she knows, she no longer finds it advisable to comfort him. Surely, thought Augustine, his mother knew. The intensity of his pain, wrote the Bishop of Hippo, proved that he had not yet learned how to love rightly -- i.e. rather than loving individuals as parts of God, he loved persons as if they were gods. Much later, when reflecting on that passage in the *Confessions*, Aquinas suggests that Augustine got it wrong. It's not that she, Monica, didn't care, it's that she doesn't know. All knowledge,

---

8. This is the Nietzschean characterization of religious consciousness, a characterization expressed most concisely in the opening sections of his *Will to Power*.

9. And while we see rather dimly at present, we are confident that "all things work together for good for those who love the Lord." In the "Grand Inquisitor", Ivan admits from the outset that our "Euclidean minds" are unable to grasp these grander purposes (where partial ill blends into a beautiful harmony, a universal good, and all confess that God is perfectly just) --- but he doesn't want to understand, he wants to "stick to the facts." Augustine says that it is a testimony to God's greatness that He can use evil for goodness.

10. John Atwell, *Schopenhauer on the Character of the World: The Metaphysics of Will*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995, 155.

according to Thomas, begins --but does not end-- with perception. Perception depends on certain bodily organs. It follows then that in the absence of our bodies, or when our perceptive organs are malfunctioning, we lack the wherewithal for knowing. When we die, our soul is separated from our body and we lay in a state of "soul sleeping," i.e. a dream state in which we remain intellectually active by virtue of our memories (and, perhaps, our communion with the other saints[11]). This explains the need, in Thomas, for the bodily resurrection of all believers. When believers receive spiritual bodies, they will perceive -- through perfected organs of perception -- perfectly (i.e. face to face). So according to Thomas, Augustine remained unconsoled because Monica didn't actually know that he was grieving.

All this by way of dramatic and conceptual background; we are now prepared, I think, for a noble lie -- a stretching of the truth. Let us suppose that God really did become flesh and died; and suppose that the "body of Christ" really is the Church.[12] The Old Testament documents the various and, for Christians, ill-fated attempts by God to make a lasting covenant with his people; the New Testament marks the beginning of a new and very peculiar kind of covenant -- in the New Testament, God holds up both ends of the bargain. To do this, God must sacrifice His only begotten Son; in essence, literally, this means that God must sacrifice Himself -- i.e. take on flesh and die. Every sacrifice requires, so we are taught,[13] both risk and trust. What is it that God risked? Whom did God trust?

Perhaps God hazarded a single and ultimate act of faith; perhaps He chose to identify Himself with His people to such an extent that His fate lay with theirs.[14] If this were the case, the notion of infinity as something strictly opposed to finitude would no longer appropriately apply to God; if this were the case, either the finite would become infinite or the infinite would cease to be. It is clear from the New Testament that we are all members of one body[15] and, according to Romans 12:4, "just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body and each member belongs to all the others." Now what, given this metaphor, would happen if one --or many or all-- of the members failed to function as it should? Surely, the body as a whole would malfunction. What if Christ, who is the mediator between God and persons, requires His Body in order to perform His function as mediator? What if Aquinas were right and all knowledge is indirectly contingent on a well-functioning body. Could it be that a God Who knew everything would risk, in the sacrifice of His only begotten Son, the capacity to know anything? Could it be that God is squinting, blindly staring, but has no eyes --a bodily organ or cognitive wherewithal-- to see? Could it be that God does not know that the little children are suffering?

V. Conclusion.

God can be seen, wrote Hamann, but only by blind prophets with staring eyes; and according to Eckhart, the eyes through which we observe God are the same as those through which God sees us. Streams converge. God sees, but only by means of blind prophets with staring eyes. By faith the deaf hear and the blind see; by the same faith, the deaf are heard and the blind are seen. It is, according to my noble lie, with squinted – blind and staring – eyes that the body of Christ is resuscitated, that God perceives the suffering of little children, and the Kingdom of God is finally ushered in. For the sake of suffering children, for the sake of a suffering God, and for the sake of our own suffering, we squint. Faith is fired by the imagination, the capacity to see the "not yet"; according to James, with whom this essay began, it is by faith – by meeting the hypothesis half-way – that we gain the "opportunity to make god's acquaintance."[16] Perhaps the old myths are no longer able to feed the imagination and inspire faith.[17] Toward the end of his *Varieties of Religious Experience*, James writes that the faith-state "may hold a very minimum of intellectual content. . . . It may be a mere vague enthusiasm, half-spirited, half vital, a courage, and a feeling that great and wondrous things are in the air" (VRE: 505). Perhaps what we need is a new set of myths, a new set of noble lies. If successful, this thought experiment -- i.e. this noble lie -- draws our attention toward the necessary and sufficient conditions of an active faith. And this, if I am not mistaken, draws us rather close to James's unique variety of religious experience in which evil is "converted into a bracing and tonic good by a simple change of the sufferer's inner attitude from one of fear to one of fight" (VRE: 88). If so, the incurable evil associated with monotheism is converted – though less obviously – into something curable, which is not to say – obviously -- that it is cured.

—Kipton E. Jensen is a visiting scholar in the department of philosophy at Harvard; his research project is titled "Reading Misreading: On Some Hegelisms in Classical American Pragmatism." *His e-mail address is kejensen@fas.harvard.edu*

---

11. Though it is difficult to say exactly how we might perceive the presence of the saints without use of our perceptive organs.

12. See Col 1:24: "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church.

13. According to Tillich's *The Dynamics of Faith*; see especially, Chapter II.

14. Recall Shestov's claim, in *Athens and Jerusalem*, that the significance of the final judgment is that all things are still undecided -- even the fate of the Father.

15. See, e.g., Eph 4.25, 5.30 and 1Cor 12.12.

16. James, *The Will to Believe*, Dover Publications: New York, 1956, 28.

17. See Dewey's excellent essay on this subject, "Our Common Faith."

WJ and Aldo Leopold:

Reflections toward a Pragmatic Environmental Ethic

by Phil Oliver

The legacy of ecological superstar Aldo Leopold has until quite recently been neglected in many quarters, perhaps most egregiously among professional philosophers. The big question for Leopold was how we could best conceive, feel, and act upon our relation to non-human nature; that should be our question, too. The crucial issue here is not merely the ethical status of pursuing our own self-interest & instrumentality, or of exalting a narrowly-drawn conception of economic usefulness to individuals, corporations, or nations without serious regard for the consequent impact on plants, animals, oceans and atmosphere. It is more fundamentally about something at once primal, complicated, and intangible: our species' very identity and self-understanding. My own predisposition in thinking about such issues is also that of the American philosophical tradition of James and Dewey. I believe with them that the human animal has evolved and is evolving in response to the demands of the extra-human environment and, more recently, in response to its own cultural milieu. Thus have we inherited a growing capacity for applied critical intelligence which allows us, occasionally, to manipulate the world with forethought and a sensitivity to both aims and outcomes. I agree with them that the element of human purposiveness and self-interest ought not be presumed illegitimate or ethically dubious, & so disregarded in the formulation of ethical principles and judgments. I wonder, then, how Leopold's stance will look in the light of such tenets of American philosophy as I've just indicated.

I think Jamesians and Deweyans can agree with Leopold that a biosystem and its constituents are properly regarded as valuable in their own right, not merely in relation to the pecuniary or other purposes of persons; and they can agree that, as a subset of the vast biotic community, the human community is obliged to recognize the moral force of claims to consideration emanating from beyond itself. They can agree with the spirit of Leopold's dictum that "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community [and] is wrong when it tends otherwise,"[1] though most pragmatists prefer phrasing more transparently amenable to the gray areas of ethical deliberation (we might append to Leopold's statement: "and a thing is problematic when its tendencies are complex or ambiguous"). They should unreservedly share Leopold's esteem for biodiversity and his "love, respect, and admiration" for non-human nature as direct extensions of philosophical pluralism and pragmatic naturalism. There is a parallel worth noticing between the varieties of possible experience— James's perpetual fascination— and the varieties of life and interactively life-sustaining processes into which nature has organized herself. The tradition of James and Dewey (and Emerson and Thoreau) finds in nature rich and instructive allegory. This is not to subordinate nature, it is to elevate humanity.

A Leopoldian in turn can agree with pragmatists (and transcendentalists) that it is still persons who must choose to so regard the biotic community of non-persons, and who must internalize this way of recognizing the value of the non-human before that recognition can engender a working ethic." No important change in ethics," Leopold acknowledges, "was ever accomplished without an internal change" of heart and mind. True enough, the instrinsic worth of John Muir's alligators– "unfallen, undepraved... honorable representatives of the great saurians of older creation"[2] — does not depend on anyone's preference for alligator shoes. But humans still are the only members of the biotic community capable of pressing a claim of worth, or of insisting on it. Humans alone can discover, appreciate, and articulate the best interests of the whole biotic community (always by our present and shifting lights, of course); and humans alone can attempt to agree on which criteria of "integrity, stability, and beauty" should apply. Our primacy in this regard may be an evolutionary accident, but it is an accident freighted with opportunity. It thrusts upon us the very special responsibility of stewardship. The challenge of stewardship is, as Leopold asserts, to replace "man the conqueror" with "man the biotic citizen." The pragmatically-minded biotic citizen faces as well the challenge of retaining the conqueror's ability and will to marshal and mobilize resources– intellectual resources especially, for the purposes of this analogy– on behalf of a galvanizing cause. There is in our time no worthier cause than "conservation," the ultimate alternative for us all being extinction.

Anthropomorphism, species-ism, and quietism are our most seductive potential pitfalls, if we really mean to accord all members of the entire land community– "soils, waters, plants, and animals," the whole energy pyramid or food chain– an ethically-rooted respect

---

1. Aldo Leopold, "The Land Ethic", in *Sand County Almanac and Sketches Here and There* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 224-25. Originally published 1949. Subsequent Leopold quotes here refer to this volume.

2. Bill McKibben, *The End of Nature* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1989), 176.

which defers to their own biotic right to healthful coexistence, but which also bears the mantle of active stewardship. I'm sure you know exactly what I mean by those first two ism's, the sort of attitude encapsulated in one anti-environmentalist's blunt insistence that "Damage to penguins, or sugar pines, or geological marvels is simply irrelevant... Penguins are important because people enjoy seeing them walk about rocks... I have no interest in preserving penguins for their own sake."[3] This is the epitome of contemptuous disrespect for non-human nature. Can we effectively balance respect and engagement? Can we at once acknowledge the independence and integrity of the rest of the living world, and simultaneously commit to our own resourcefulness, ingenuity, and "management" skills in ameliorating the problems of the biotic community whose thoughtful organ we would be, especially the problems we've engendered with our internal combustion engines and chlorofluorocarbons and so on? My answer is to turn the question around: How, in good conscience, can we not? How can we not at least make an attempt at respectful engagement? Not to undertake this enterprise is what I mean by quietism. We can't just "let being be," in an old Heideggarism I recall from my undergraduate pre-education; we can't just let the penguins and the pines shift for themselves in the face of environmental depredations which we ourselves have sponsored.

I've asked Robert[4] if he thinks Leopold's view is that intervention in non-human nature, even as "treatment" of a sick biosphere, is always in some sense a fall from the preternatural grace of wilderness, or the like; or if he thinks instead that there is far more subtlety (expressed or intended) in Leopold's view. Robert says Leopold's mature view is more subtle, and I'm inclined to agree with him. That is, I think the spirit of Leopold's attitude and ethic is far less hostile to the human presence in nature, the active and evolving human aspect of nature, than that of many Deep Ecologists of our day. He does think that "humans can restore ecosystems, and also work to enhance ecosystems to increase their resilience." But Robert also writes: "Leopold assumed that healthy land was in a stable equilibrium. Renewal means returning to this stable equilibrium... something should be able to renew on its own, and should not require outside, human intervention... any outside intervention whatsoever in the ecosystem case implied the system was unhealthy. [This is] coherent with Leopold's view of land-illness and with his skepticism about the ability to intervene positively in ecosystems." I have to question whether the mature view coheres with the skepticism.

"The land was ours before we were the land's... before we were her people," pronounced poet Robert Frost in "The Gift Outright", his inaugural christening of the new Kennedy administration 40 years ago. I had never quite been sure what he meant. After reflecting on Aldo Leopold's land ethic with its conception of conservation as "a state of health in the land" and of "harmony between man and land," I begin to think I may have an inkling of what Frost might have meant. He might have meant, in part, that our proper relation to this continent and even this planet is much more intimate than is suggested either by conventional consumerist models which regard non-human nature as a resource for our discretionary harvesting, or by new Deep Ecological assumptions which seek to knock us off our pedestal as harvesters/stewards of a world which in no respect, they contend, can be called "ours." My impression is that Leopold's nascent environmental ethic, which preceded Frost's christening of Camelot by a dozen years, rejects both approaches. The case it makes against cavalier, ethically unconcerned global consumerism is clear enough. But many of Leopold's Green-leaning admirers would surely be mistaken to enlist him in the fight against what they seem to see as an unmitigated human pestilence, or (in the words of an "Earth First!" activist) "the human pox that's ravaging this precious, beautiful planet." Leopold does seem to lend a misanthropic hand when he writes, as Robert quotes: "Regarding society and land collectively as an organism, that organism has suddenly developed pathological symptoms, i.e., self-accelerating rather than self-compensating departures from normal functioning. The tools cannot be dropped, hence the brains which created them, and which are now mostly dedicated to creating still more, must be at least in part diverted to controlling those already in hand." "Tools" here presumably refers to various human artifices and interventions. But if they "cannot be dropped" without exacerbating the pathology they must be no simple "pox." And if "the science of land-health [as opposed to "the art of land-doctoring"] is a job for the future,", it's going to require some dedicated human practitioners.

No, I suspect Leopold's position may just be more congruent with the humane, but not quite Green, ecology which was hinted at in Al Gore's Earth in the Balance. Such a view recognizes the centrality of questions about human spiritual identity as inseparable from a healthy relationship to the non-human nature which is our native habitat and sustenance. But this is a view which ultimately rejects the paradigm of health and disease as really capturing what that relationship needs to be in order to sustain human life without in the process rendering non-human nature unsustainable and even unrecognizable. Indeed, humanity has

---

3. McKibben 151-52.

4. Quotes of Robert Hood refer to his unpublished paper on Aldo Leopold, read at the Tennessee Philosophical Association meeting in Nashville on November 11, 2000.

sometimes disrupted the biosphere in ways it would not be misleading to characterize metaphorically in terms of disease and contagion. But so long as we stick to this metaphor we'll have a hard time grasping the notion that we aren't something intrinsically alien and hostile to nature. We'll have a hard time believing that we can embody nature ourselves. This is dysfunctional thinking, of a kind that obscures the simple but crucial insight that our ecologically destructive behavior is self-destructive. "One of the ways our civilization secures adherence to its rules is by teaching the separation of people from the natural world, and suppressing the emotions that might allow us to feel the absence of our connection to the earth."[5]

Getting the connection right, though, and conveying it honestly, is tricky. The Gaia hypothesis of a univocally ordered planetary organism, for instance, can seem glib and superficial when its proponents declare that "our species with its technology is simply an inevitable part of the natural scene" or that everything we make and do "is ultimately based on a variety of processes including that of DNA replication"[6]. The first assertion (about the inevitability of ourselves and our particular technological accoutrements) is metaphysically speculative and possibly too good to be true; the second (about the chemical basis of all life's fine details) is much too broad, too true to be good. Bill McKibben rightly observes in *The End of Nature* that these are cold debater's points and not expressions of any very deeply felt connection.

Michael Pollan begins to get the facts and the feeling of our natural connection to the rest of nature right, I think, when he explicitly casts the issue in terms of human origins and aspirations, and opposes both to the quietistic attitude. "Contingency is an invitation to participate in history... [A]ren't we also one of nature's contingencies? And if our cigarette butts and Norway maples and acid rain are going to shape the future of this place, then why not also our hopes and desires... [T]o exclude human desire would be unnatural."[7] This is an evolutionary-pragmatic insight, and it invites speculation about what might be "normal" for a biotic community which includes humans sufficiently evolved to have desires and the intelligence to devise means of attaining their satisfaction. When Leopold espouses a land laboratory in the form of wilderness, to establish a "base-datum of normality, a picture of how healthy land maintains itself as an organism," is he implicitly excluding human desire? I conclude with this and a few more open (and only partly rhetorical) questions with which our children and theirs will get to grapple. Should a land ethic assume that deviation from a state of pre-human wilderness is abnormal? Can we learn to value, study, revere, selectively preserve, and enjoy the earth in varying states of human association without always courting the fear that we've behaved badly as biotic citizens just by being here? Need we regard ourselves as forever harboring a toxic threat to the arc of our planet's evolutionary destiny, or can we become comfortable with the idea of ourselves as its latest evolutionary adaptation and possibly its last, best hope? Can we accept the challenge of stewardship? Can we be ourselves, and be upstanding biotic citizens too? It is Aldo Leopold's legacy to have provoked such questions, and our good fortune to have been provoked.

Let me close with a benediction from the author of *Earth in the Balance:* "For civilization as a whole, the faith that is so essential to restore the balance now missing in our relationship to the earth is the faith that we do have a future. We can believe in that future and work to achieve it and preserve it, or we can whirl blindly on, behaving as if one day there will be no children to inherit our legacy. The choice is ours; the earth is in the balance."

May our next President share that pragmatic faith.

—Phil Oliver = POliver826@aol.com

This was adapted from a reply to Robert Hood's "What Is a Healthy Environment? Environmental Ethics, Aldo Leopold and Ecosystem Health" (Tennessee Philosophical Association, Nashville, November 11, 2000). Phil Oliver is the author of *William James's "Springs of Delight": The Return to Life* (Vanderbilt University Press, 2001). He is at work on a book about childhood and American philosophy.

---

5. Al Gore, *Earth in the Balance: Ecology and the Human Spirit* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1992), 227.

6. McKibben, 64.

7. Michael Pollan, *Second Nature: A Gardener's Education* (New York/Boston: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1991), 184-85.

Reflections on the Shaw Memorial

by Randall Albright

Augustus Saint-Gaudens received the commission for this work in 1884 upon the recommendation of his friend Henry Hobson Richardson to honor Robert Gould Shaw, commander of the first all- African-American volunteer company in the Civil War, although it was *led* by white men. Shaw's family thought that he died too young to be honored like a general. During its development, the design moved from that of only Shaw on horseback to Shaw surrounded by the black members of the 54th regiment.

At one point, Saint-Gaudens was working with 40 African-American models for the final effort. It took him 13 years from commission to final unveiling of the bronze cast, measuring 3.35 by 4.27 meters. He is said to have tried to balance the task of creating distinguished individuals with the counter-image of a troop marching together as one.

In real life, African-American members of this regiment had faced racism among other Northern troops, the danger of enslavement if captured by Confederates, and other difficulties, as chronicled in the movie *Glory* (1989). When finally placed into battle in an unsuccessful attempt to take Fort Wagner in South Carolina, many were killed, including Shaw.

In the early 1980s the names of the African-Americans in the regiment were added to the monument.

The memorial was unveiled on May 31, 1897. A poem by James Russell Lowell is inscribed on the front. William James gave what most considered to be the main oration, Saint-Gaudens himself spoke, and Booker T. Washington gave the closing remarks, at the nearby Music Hall (now known as the Orpheum Theater) on Tremont Street. Booker T. Washington and James discussed the event both before and afterwards through letters.

James wrote to Washington with a draft of his address on March 8th, before the event, that he didn't "know whether in the moralizing remarks at the end, placing civic virtue above military courage", he was touching on Washington's "province."[1] He went on to say that he hoped not. Washington apparently did not

care to compare James's work with his own, which he wanted to write independently. James later wrote to Washington that he had "tried to shape the thing towards a sort of mugwump conclusion — mugwump in the sense that the daily civic virtues which save countries from getting into civil war are more precious to the world than the martial ones that save them after they get in."[2]

While many may have known William merely as professor at Harvard and author of *The Principles of Psychology*, the 54th regiment had personal significance to him. His younger brother, "Wilkie," had served in it as adjutant. Wilkie died in 1883 at the age of 38 after having also served in a failed racially integrated farm

---

1. March 8, 1897; *The Correspondence of William James, Volume 8* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia Press, 2000), p. 242
2. Ibid; April 16, 1897; p. 260

experiment designed to help ease the transition to freedom for former slaves with his brother Bob in Florida. William himself had avoided service during the Civil War.

James evidently felt awkward, being picked for the event. He wrote afterwards to his brother, Henry, that he would "never accept such a job again. It is entirely outside of my legitimate line of business, although my speech seems to have been a great success, if I can judge by the encomiums which are pouring in upon me on every hand. I brought in some mugwumpery at the end, but it was very difficult to manage it."[3]

The following are some passages from the oration that James delivered.

> The historic significance of an event is measured neither by its material magnitude, nor by its immediate success. Thermopylæ was a defeat; but to the Greek imagination, Leonidas and his few Spartans stood for the whole worth of Grecian life. Bunker Hill was a defeat; but for our people, the fight over that breastwork has always seemed to show as well as any victory that our forefathers were men of a temper not to be finally overcome. And so here.....
>
> Look at the monument and read the story;—see the mingling of elements which the sculptor's genius has brought so vividly before the eye. There on foot go the dark outcasts, so true to nature that one can almost hear them breathing as they march. State after State by its laws had denied them to be human persons. The Southern leaders in congressional debates, insolent in their security, loved most to designate them by the contemptuous collective epithet of "this peculiar kind of property." There they march, warm-blooded champions of a better day for man. There on horseback, among them, in his very habit as he lived, sits the blue- eyed child of fortune, upon whose happy youth every divinity had smiled. Onward they move together, a single resolution kindled in their eyes, and animating their otherwise so different frames. The bronze that makes their memory eternal betrays the very soul and secret of those awful years. (RGS, 39-40)[4]
>
> War—War with its abominably casual, inaccurate methods, destroying good and bad together, but at last able to hew a way out of intolerable situations, when through man's delusion of perversity every better way is blocked. (RGS, 41-42)
>
> Our nation has been founded in what we may call our American religion, baptized and reared in the faith that a man requires no master to take care of him, and that common people can work out their salvation well enough together if left free to try. But the founders had not dared to touch the great intractable exception; and slavery had wrought until at last the only alternative for the nation was to fight or die. What Shaw and his comrades stand for and show us is that in such an emergency Americans of all complexions and conditions can go forth like brothers, and meet death cheerfully if need be, in order that this religion of our native land shall not become a failure on earth.
>
> We of this Commonwealth believe in that religion; and it is not at all because Robert Shaw was an exceptional genius, but simply because he was faithful to it as we all may hope to be faithful in our measure when the times demand, that we wish his beautiful image to stand here for all time, an inciter to similarly unselfish public deeds. (RGS, 43-44)
>
> Man is once for all a fighting animal; centuries of peaceful history could not breed the battle-instinct out of us; and our pugnacity is the virtue in need of reinforcement by reflection, least in need of orator's or poet's help.
>
> What we really need the poet's and orator's help to keep alive in us is not, then, the common and gregarious courage which Robert Shaw showed when he marched with you, men of the Seventh Regiment. It is that more lonely courage which he showed when he dropped his warm commission in the glorious Second to head your dubious fortunes, negroes of the Fifty-fourth. That lonely kind of courage (civic courage as we call it in times of peace) is the kind of valor to which the monuments of nations should most of all be reared, for the survival of the fittest has not bred it into the bone of human beings as it has bred military valor; and of five hundred of us who could storm a battery side by side with others, perhaps not one would be found ready to risk his worldly fortunes all alone in resisting an enthroned abuse. The deadliest enemies of nations are not their foreign foes; they always dwell within their borders. And from these internal enemies civilization is always in need of being saved. The nation blest above

3. June 5, 1897; *William and Henry James, Selected Letters* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia Press, 1997), p. 347

4. **RGS:** William James, "Robert Gould Shaw," re-printed in *Memories and Studies* (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1911)

all nations is she in whom the civic genius of the people does the saving day by day, by acts without external picturesqueness; by speaking, writing, voting reasonably; by smiting corruption swiftly; by good temper between parties; by the people knowing true men when they see them, and preferring them as leaders to rabid partisans or empty quacks. (RGS, 56-8)

The lesson that our war ought most of all to teach us is the lesson that evils must be checked in time, before they grow so great.The Almighty cannot love such long-postponed accounts, or such tremendous settlements. And surely He hates all settlements that do such quantities of incidental devils' work. Our present situation, with its rancors and delusions, what is it but the direct outcome of the added powers of government, the corruptions and inflation of the war? Every war leaves such miserable legacies, fatal seeds of future war and revolution, unless the civic virtues of the people save the State in time. (RGS, 58-9)

Edward H. Madden offers this recent comment on the event in James's life:

The whole affair is significant because it has bearing on the question of James's attitudes toward the status of black Americans. Later commentators view him as holding racially progressive views. The record does not sustain this view....

Yet, that being said, it must also be said that the evidence in these letters is both conflicting and ambiguous.[5]

Notes

"Robert Gould Shaw: Oration by Professor William James" can also be found in *Essays in Religion and Morality* (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1982), currently out of print.

Linda Simon began *Genuine Reality, A Life of William James* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1998) with a story of this oration.

Joshua I. Miller saw this as a key document from WJ's repertoire in *Democratic Temperament, The Legacy of William James* (Lawrence: UP of Kansas, 1997).

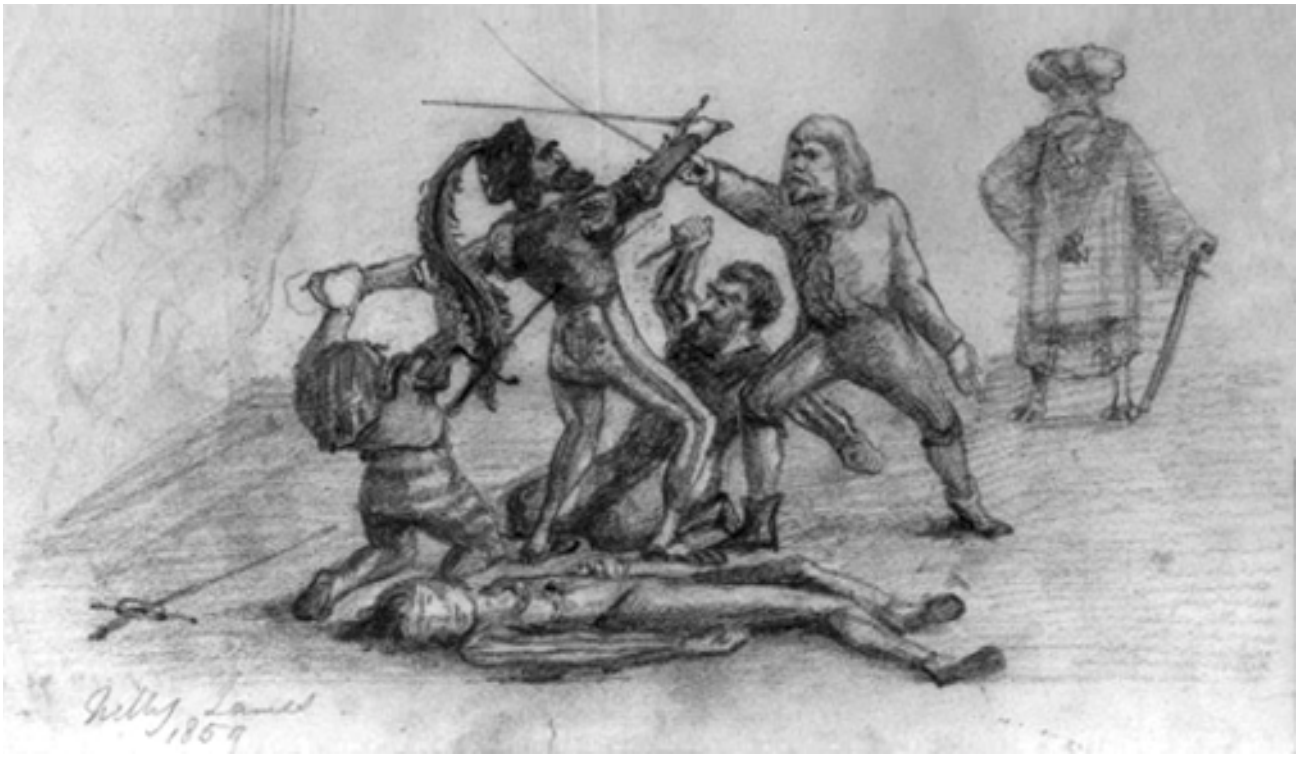
R.W.B. Lewis talked about Wilkie's role both in and after the Civil War in *The Jameses, A Family Narrative* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1991).

Saint-Gaudens's home in Cornish, New Hampshire, is run by the National Park Service. The WebSite is: www.sgnhs.org
Click on Augustus Saint-Gaudens/Public Monuments/Shaw Memorial to see a photograph of the monument.

Best newspaper coverage I found was in The Boston Herald, May 30 and 31, and June 1, 1897.

---

5. Introduction, *The Correspondence of William James, Volume 8* (Charlottesville: U of Virginia Press, 2000), p. xxxv



Sword Fight

by William James (1859)

Making History: Jacques Barzun's Jamesian Work

by David Dannenbaum

History was not made by men and women who invented, initiated, imitated, and thus left behind their tools, laws, religions, and arts. History is, literally, made by writers, who select patterns in the stream of human experience and present them to readers as literature.

In many books, historian and critic Jacques Barzun shares with his readers those patterns he has observed and selected during a lifetime of reading, writing, learning and teaching. Recently he shared how he selects the patterns:

> …the work that…affected me like a revelation, that churned up and recast all my notions about life and the mind, thought and feeling, science and the art of writing was William James's *Principles of Psychology.*… I gathered from the narrative, with its sallies into all regions of culture, that the mind works natively, not like a recording camera, not like a logical machine, but like an artist.
>
> The stream of consciousness is given, a tumultuous flood propelled from within and organizing the experience received from without. From the moment I grasped these conclusions, I have been moved by the lure of creating similar order (not system) in the domain of history. The past bears a genetic likeness to the stream of consciousness in that it is the product of innumerable minds working on experience for the sake of action. It shows the same consecutiveness within confusion and thus presents the same problems as those which confront the artist: selection and patterning. History cannot be made a science, and it overflows every system that has been imposed upon it by the so-called philosophers of history….
>
> James's own historical sense is evident in the examples he gives in his great book, and he shares the historian's zest for experience, for the concrete instead of the abstract. Indeed, James's pragmatic test of truth is tantamount to assessing a slice of history.[1]

In Barzun's latest book, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*[2], he selects patterns from the streams of experience flowing through the peoples of Europe and the Western Hemisphere, and he uses several devices to identify those patterns. The device most immediately experienced by the reader is a series of quotations pertinent to the time, place and people being written about. The quotations are set in bold-face type along page margins throughout the book. The first one, on page xiv in Barzun's introduction, is from William James's "The Social Value of the College Bred":

> Mankind does nothing save through initiatives on the part of inventors, great and small, and imitation by the rest of us. Individuals of genius show the way and set the patterns. The rivalry of the patterns is the history of the world.

On page 39, Barzun deals with the rivalry of faiths in the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and James's words share the marginal space with Ignatius Loyola, William Shakespeare, and Saint James:

> Perform the acts of faith and faith will come.
> —Loyola, *Exercises* (1548)
>
> Assume a virtue, if you have it not …
> For use can almost change the stamp of nature
> —Hamlet to his mother (1602)
>
> So with faith, if it does not lead to action, it is in itself a lifeless thing.
> —The Gospel According to Saint James
>
> Only act in cold blood as if the thing in question were real and it will become so knit with habit and emotion that our interests in it will be those which characterize belief.
> —William James, *Principles of Psychology* (1890)

Later, on page 777, while describing our demotic times, Barzun puts in the margin some revealing words of Ice-T, the rap star: "It's very exciting to violate the law, though it can also lead to a kind of madness."

However, Barzun is more than a latter-day Bartlett. He is a critic, and to guide us through his variety of patterns, he uses themes that recur throughout the book: abstraction; analysis; emancipation, primitivism, reductivism, secularism, self-consciousness, scientism, specialism. For example, Barzun writes about reductivism and James:

> [James's] contribution to the understanding of beliefs (in contrast with truth) is well known but not always rightly represented. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* he studied the many forms and directions that the human impulse of faith can take and the links between these forms and other mental traits. He warned against the reductive view that explains mysticism as frustrated sexuality or Puritan self-torment as chronic dyspepsia.[3]

Barzun's other themes take the reader to conflicts other than faith and theology, yet he keeps his themes

tied to Jamesian ideas about the stream of experience, absolutism and pragmatism. Thus, while examining Blaise Pascal's *Pensées,* he demonstrates the fallacy of Scientism (which is not science):

> Scientism is the fallacy of believing that the method of science must be used on all forms of experience, and given time, will settle every issue. Again and again, the bright thought has occurred, "If we can only define our terms, if we can only find the basic unit, if we can spot the right 'indicators,' we can then measure and reason flawlessly, we shall have created one more science. …
>
> The motives behind scientism are culturally significant. They have been mixed, as usual: genuine curiosity in search of truth; the rage for certainty and unity; and the snobbish desire to earn the label scientist when that became a high social and intellectual rank. But these efforts, though vain, have not been without harm, to the inventors and to the world at large. The 'findings" have inspired policies affecting daily life that were enforced with the same absolute assurance as earlier ones based on religion. At the same time, the workers in the realm of intuition, the gifted finessers—artists, moralists, philosophers, historians, political theorists, and theologians—were either diverted from their proper task, while others were looking on them with disdain as dabblers in the suburbs of Truth.[4]

Barzun writes for both the first-time reader and the gentle re-reader to whom he dedicated *A Stroll with William James*[5]. And he encourages us to read on. Throughout the book he suggests that we read for ourselves about the times, places and people he is writing about. For example: "The book to read is Shaw's *Common Sense About the War*, which adroitly takes to pieces the thought clichés of the embattled mind." Or this: "The book to read is: *Ortega y Gasset: A Pragmatic Philosophy of Life*, by John T. Grahame."

Another feature of the book that I found satisfying are Barzun's Digressions on Words. From time to time he stops the narrative and explains his use of words that have become controversial and politically incorrect. Among them is pragmatism, often taken to be synonymous with "lacking spirituality," "financially profitable," or "opportunistic". Barzun says, "With such a past, there is little hope that the ism will ever regain its intended sense and an accepted connotation." He then takes the reader through three and a half pages, first demonstrating how all of us are pragmatists, whether we like it or not, and then differentiating pragmatism, which is not a philosophy, from Radical Empiricism, which is.[6]

From Dawn to Decadence, which has been nominated for a National Book Award, is a masterpiece of humanistic writing. Barzun takes the reader through the successive accomplishments and failures of men and women in the cultures that flowed (and are still flowing) through Europe and the Western Hemisphere. Human actions, concrete and messy, are at the center of this humane document, and I finished it with a deeper insight about my place in the stream of human experience than I had had before.

I was reminded of that part of William James's address "The Social Value of the College Bred", which asserts

> You can give humanistic value to to almost anything by teaching it historically. Geology, economics, mechanics, are humanities when taught with reference to the successive achievements of the geniuses to which these sciences owe their being. Not taught thus, literature remains grammar, art a catalogue, history a list of dates, and natural science a sheet of formulas and weights and measures.[7]

And I believe that we will say about Jacques Barzun what he says about William James:

> The breadth of [his] worldview and of its influence has been matched by its permanence. He is quoted apropos of innumerable subjects, and he periodically reappears in retrospective estimates expressing wonder at the extent of his powers.[8]

—David Dannenbaum = dpragma@nyct.net

Notes:

1. Ronald B. Schwartz, editor, *For the Love of Books: 115 Celebrated Writers on the Books They Love Most*, New York, Grosset/Putnam, 1999, pp. 15-16.
2. Jacques Barzun, *From Dawn to Decadence: 500 Years of Western Cultural Life*, New York, Harper/Collins, 2000.
3. *Dawn*, p. 669.
4. *Dawn*, p. 218.
5. Jacques Barzun, *A Stroll With William James*, New York, Harper and Row, 1983.
6. *Dawn*, pp. 666-669.
7. William James, "The Social Value of the College-Bred" in *William James Writings, 1902-1910*, Bruce Kuklick, ed., New York, Library of America, 1987.
8. *Dawn*, p. 669.

The Assassination of the Diadoches

by Michel Weber

To Thalès

The Greeks had a beautiful word, in the neo-Platonic School. There was a head of the School, and he succeeded the previous head; and there was a word to designate the successor head, it was the "diadoche". The diadoche. If one imagines a Leibnizian School, Whitehead is the great diadoche, but at the same time, he renews everything. Hence my desire, and why I desire so much, to talk about this author, whose dates are relatively ancient: 1861–1947. It is because he is among these authors, these very great philosophers who have been smothered, almost assassinated.

Assassinated: what does that mean? It means that from time to time schools of thought arise and institutionalise themselves. With regard to the problem of thinkers there are in a certain way two dangers—there are all the Stalins, all the Hitlers you want, in front of which thinkers have only two possibilities: to resist or to go into exile. But sometimes, inside thought, there is something else that happens sometimes, strange doctrines that arise, that settle, that gain a genuine power where there is power in that domain, that is to say in universities, and that institute a sort of court, an intellectual court of a special kind, and after them, or under them, nothing grows anymore.

Taping devices should be stopped because my speech is free. I will never write what I say, so I want to be able to say: "I have never said that!" In that sense, I accuse English analytical philosophy of having destroyed everything that was rich in thought, and I accuse Wittgenstein of having assassinated Whitehead, of having reduced Russell, his master, to a sort of essayist who does not dare to speak of logic anymore.

All this was terrible and still lasts. France has been spared, but we have our analytical philosophers; France has been spared, because it has been saved for other ordeals even worse. Good. That is to say that all this is not so well. Nothing in the domain of thought dies from natural death, really. That English and American thought before the last war was extraordinarily rich, it was of such a richness… Some authors got into the habit of treating them as if they were a little bit moronic [un peu débiles]; I'm thinking about William James. William James is a mind-blowing genius [effarant génie]. He is in philosophy exactly what his brother was to the novel. For those who are looking for a thesis subject, once again I whine about the fact that, as far as I know, there is no serious study devoted to the two James brothers and to their relationships. And then there is Whitehead, and there was another one, an Australian, the only very very great Australian philosopher, Alexander. Whitehead is read by a handful of amateurs and another handful of specialists. After all, Bergson as well....

I

This is Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) speaking on March 10, 1987, during one of his classes devoted to Leibniz's system. These classes have been actually recorded and are available under the form of a quite rough, uncritical material on the Deleuze website[1]. They belong to the same research ground on which, one year later, his book *The Fold* has been published[2]. Our translation leaves intact the indeterminations of style as they are reproduced in the quoted material.

Some stupendous thinkers are dragged in the mud by their "dear colleagues" for reasons not always obvious, even to the insiders themselves: the reader has already understood that what especially matters here is the strong attitude taken by one of the 20th century leading French philosophers in front of a certain fashionable way of doing philosophy. Three steps will be expedient to try to understand some of the ins and outs of these excommunication practices, and thereby to cast light on two of the incriminated thinkers: James and Whitehead. First, the historico-conceptual nature of philosophy is questioned for itself; second, three philosophical types are heuristically introduced—the living philosopher, the critical philosopher, and the expert philosopher—; third, two contemporary exemplifications of typological conflagrations are given—the so-called "Sokal" and "Marinoff cases".

II

Interestingly enough, the question of the "nature" of philosophy is itself a very debated issue, and not only among philosophers. One can even quite often read that there is no such thing as "philosophy", only "philosophers" being somewhat identifiable. But the question is then simply postponed: what makes some individuals "philosophers", and others vulgar pretenders? In other words, right at the beginning, the hydra of the infinite regress seems to cast its shadow on the perennial discipline. More positively, the first characteristic of philosophy is its anexteriority: it has *no exterior*. Being all-embracing in its scope, philosophy has to decide itself what it will be or ought to be: what experiences will be taken into account, how (and why) they will be analyzed, with what goal, etc. Various possibilities are of course in competition, but all orbit around the activation—or not—of a central "archeo-theoretical" axis.

Philosophy is, for the outsider, a "white box" dazzling in its pure rationality. Sheltering only dry, systematic conceptualities (like the famous "categoreal scheme" of *Process and Reality*, Part I), it is so rational an endeavour that it seems utterly abstract, even completely useless for everyday concerns. But that white box is actually immersed in an experiential atmosphere immediately apprehended by the insider: uphill, there is a quest of the origin, and down-

1. <http://www.imaginet.fr/deleuze/TXT/100387.html>

2. Gilles Deleuze, *Le Pli. Leibniz et le baroque*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1988: *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. Foreword and translation by Tom Conley, Minneapolis (Minn.), University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

hill, the quest of a holistic transformative vision. An historical perspective discloses indeed two main philosophical trends: the constant concern for, on the one hand, a *infra-rational* search of the *origin* of all things (Greek "archè") and for, on the other hand, a *supra-rational* attempt to reach an overall *vision* of everything (Greek "theoria"). This means that the purely rational moment (exoteric, that is, made public) is animated by an internal double tension (esoteric, more personal in its modalities).

Before tackling that question, however, it should be emphasized that the white box conceptualities find their necessary conditions of possibility in a peculiar *public* use of language: it is a rationality willingly purified of its subjectivity that is at work here. In a previous note,[3] the three principles axiomatized by Aristotle (the principles of identity, of non-contradiction, and of excluded middle) have been used to sketch what we mean by "rational"; this is once again exactly what is at stake: the use of a meta-criterion to circumscribe the rationality relevant to the philosophical adventure. By virtue of its anexteriority, it is solely philosophy that could settle that meta-criteriological question. In truth, digging further discloses the spirit in which language is used: the Greek concept of "logos" seals the connaturality existing between the rationality at work in the world and the one at work in human's minds. The universality of the logos means that all human beings are (potentially) equal *and* that they belong to a world build upon the same *principles* (Greek "archai").

More than this, the tight correlation existing between the Greek gnosiological project and the emergence of a new form of political government—the City-state (Greek "polis")—has to be seriously underlined. When the old aristocratic state is replaced by a bourgeois state, the ideal of a justice (Greek "diké") identical for all citizens appears. The Law is now *written* and everybody shares the same basic civic duties. But to operationalize that ideal, a strong difficulty has to be bypassed: the large difference in the nature and quality of education between the citizens. So much so that it is the common "culture" (Greek "paideia") that is the core issue, more than the limited, down-to-earth practical "education".[4] With that regard, the polis had to promote the public use of a rational language to settle conflicts of interest between citizen. In other words, philosophy and the City-state have common public destinies: the use of a rationalized language to materialise the dream of a new cultural ideal for which education is *universalized*, not only in the sense that it is stretched towards a genuine cultural vision, but also because esoteric teachings, carved especially for an elite, are replaced by exoteric teachings aiming at *elitizing* every citizen.

Three complementary standpoints on this politico-conceptual revolution are expedient to explain that, on the one hand, philosophy is not created out of nothing—there is a significant continuity between the mythological background of the Greek mind and the new cultural project—while, on the other hand, a clear disruption is identifiable. From the perspective of the white box, we need to contemplate (i) the conceptual material and (ii) the explanatory schemes at work; from the perspective of the archeo-theoretical axis, we have to assess (iii) the nature of the experiential stream that runs through it.

(i) With regard to the *conceptual* material—essentially the four elements (earth, water, air, fire)—, there are two key-words: polarisation and abstraction.

As soon as one wishes to pull apart the primordial fullness of experience (see the concept of "pure experience"), twin categories necessarily crystallise (warm/cold, wet/dry, matter/form, particle/field…). Various traditions have exploited the fact that a shape is graspable only in contrast with a given background. Cohen's "law of polarity" seeks to give a broad formulation to that obvious slope of a human's mind (if not of the cosmos itself). It states that ultimate contraries are mutually interdependent correlatives, so that nothing real can be described by an exclusive reference to only one of the contraries.[5] *Without Contraries is no progression* (Blake).

Whereas polarisation runs through the mythico-philosophical dispute, abstraction is, strictly speaking, exploited only by philosophy. It strips reality from the mysterious power of change that myth conferred to it, and rejects the old logic of ambivalence to the profit of the observance (desiring not to make any exceptions) of the principles of identity and contradiction. Nevertheless, there is no departure from "irrationality" to fully fledged "rationality": through a rigorous definition of the concepts used and a clear demarcation of the levels of concreteness they involve, philosophy institutes for a *new form* of rationality, making room for "nature" (Greek "physis") where there were only "gods". The instinctive belief that there is an Order of Nature first took the form of a narrative of supernatural moods: there is a hierarchy (or conflicting hierarchies) of gods and/or goddesses that weave the mundane destinies. With Greek philosophy,[6] that belief has been naturalised and mundane events can now be mundanely traced in every detailed occurrence. Under the influence of Revelation, that natural belief took new roots in Chris-

---

3. Cf. "James' Contiguism of "Pure Experience"", *Streams of William James*, Volume 1, Issue 3, Winter 1999, pp. 19-22.

4. Werner Wilhelm Jaeger, *Paideia. Die Formung des griechischen Menschen*, Berlin und Leipzig, Walter De Gruyter & Co., 1936: *Paideia. The Ideals of Greek Culture*. Volume I. Book I, *Archaic Greece*; Book II, *The Mind of Athens*. Translated from the Second German Edition by Gilbert Highet, New York, Oxford University Press, 1939); Volume II, *In Search of the Divine Centre*. Translated from the German Manuscript by Gilbert Highet (OUP, 1943); Volume III, *The Conflict of Cultural Ideals in the Age of Plato*. Translated from the German Manuscript by Gilbert Highet (OUP, 1944).

5. Morris Raphael Cohen, *Reason and Nature. An Essay on the Meaning of Scientific Method*, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc., 1931. Charles Hartshorne (1897–2000) has made an extensive use of Cohen's "law".

6. We cannot afford here the comparative question of similar modes of thought in different civilizations. With that regard, let us mention, for instance, Joseph Needham (With the research assistance of Wang Ling), *Science and Civilization in China*, Seven volumes in twelve parts, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1954-.

tian faith, thereby vividly implanting itself in the European mind: according to Whitehead, it is the "greatest contribution of medievalism to the formation of the scientific movement. I mean the inexpugnable belief that every detailed occurrence can be correlated with its antecedents in a perfectly definite manner, exemplifying general principles. Without this belief the incredible labours of scientists would be without hope. It is this instinctive conviction, vividly poised before the imagination, which is the motive power of research : —that there is a secret, a secret which can be unveiled."[7]

(ii) With regard to the explanatory *schemes* at work: systematization and technical analogy are the key-words to understand the difference in the weaving of the polar concepts. Of course, in continuity with the law of polarity, philosophers still exploit developmental symmetries and symbolic patterns of concordances between categories, but we have here two major differences between the mythological and the philosophical world-views.

On the one hand, historico-genealogical narratives are replaced by a systematization of the "principial quest": the understanding of the world does not exploit family trees anymore, but first principles; sexual union is replaced by physical causation. As long as the two meanings of "phuein" (to produce and to beget) were mixed up—as well as the two meanings of "genesis" (origin and birth)—, the understanding of becoming lay upon the mythological image of the sexual union. To understand a given phenomenon was to find its mother and father, to draw up a family tree. Now the categorial landscape is drastically changed. We have just seen that behind these abstractive practices lies the intuition of the existence of pervading natural rules—underlying all events alike—that can be expressed without reference to the divine (supernatural). There is thus a shift from a mythological, significantly supernatural, experience to an horizontal, natural one. It is no more the majesty and the ritual reproducibility of the exemplary acts having occurred in *illo tempore* that illuminate and transfigure everyday life ; it is everyday life, its very immediacy, that makes the primordial analogically intelligible.

On the other hand, the move from an organic analogy binding microcosm and macrocosm together to a technical analogy (the craftsman and his work) demands as well the bypassing of the narrative of the "parents" who have given life to the World *in illo tempore*, replacing it by the quest for the *natural* force that, here and now, explains the genesis of all things. The secret God-grin in the trees and in the teapot is replaced by the tempered fertility of the omnipresent logos. The question basically remains the same (*quid* of the genesis of the World), but solely philosophy formulates it expressly.

(iii) The *archeo-theoretical axis* is already at work during the "mythological age". In both cases, the wise man is possessed by the same intellectual tropism tainted with religiosity: to grasp the origin for contemplative purposes (which is the sole true praxis). Meaningful existence is reached when one is at unison with the Whole or universal mythos, soon to be replaced by the universal logos. But the axis is not theorised as such before philosophy and, what is more, its nature its transformed with the adoption of the "white box" rationality instead of the black box rationality, carefully protected from profanation by the local religious structure.

In conclusion, it is quite easy to summarize the essence of the new paradigm : there is only *one single* physis, one single temporality. Everything that exists is natural; human beings, the divine, the World form a unified world manifesting the same living power. The mysterious and initiatory dimension of the primordial time is replaced by the banality of a purely natural causation that is discussed in the marketplace. There is inflation of the domain of the physis, homogenisation of the causality by exclusion of the natural-supernatural mixture. The price to pay for this horizontalisation is the redefinition of the religious territory: the stipulation—by the application of the principle of identity where the mythological narrative used (non reflexively) a logic of opposition and of complementarity—of distinctions between the natural, the divine, and the conceptual. Everything that was implicit, equivocal and ambiguous, the overlapping of planes which cannot be dichotomised, become rationally explicated, univocalized and carefully differentiated. Mythology is happy with likelihood, philosophy asks for argumentative truths.

III

The art of framing applicable generalizations is a very demanding exercise, especially when tackling the question of the nature of philosophy. For the sake of this short note, the following tripartition can be exploited. It will be noticed, however, that, as usual, outstanding philosophers do not *really* fit in any categories whatsoever.

The living philosopher

The first philosophers—the Presocratics—were above all interested in discovering the *principle* of natural beings. With Socrates, the philosophical project is dramatically re-centered around the transformative exploration of the principle of *human* action. The life and death of Socrates displays one single truth: there has to be a genuine compatibility between the everyday life of a philosopher and his/her philosophical assumptions; cosmological speculations are of no use unless the question of the "authentic life" is settled first. Philosophy, in other words, has to be consonant with life as it is lived. The absence of existential contradictions is quintessential; nothing could be worse than contradicting oneself.[8] Now, *all* the thinkers who are worth of the name "philosopher" have answered the call of the authentic life and *none* of them have lived a life discrepant with their teachings (if any teachings—not talking about writings—were actually made).

That fundamental characteristic does—or does not—shines forth in every writings of a given thinker… so much so that it is both easy and difficult to pick the perfect

7. Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, New York, Free Press, 1967, p. 12.

8. Plato, *Gorgias* 482c.

exemplification. There is always a sort of speculative melancholy accompanying the archeo-theoretical quest, a radical solitude in front of the finite and the in-finite alike. The towering importance of human life is intuited beyond the tragedy of existence, but that primordial evidence is difficult to argue for, especially in an ontological context that definitively revokes any attempt of "theodicy". Personal evidences cannot be broadcasted without the use of impersonal vectors, something that makes communication quite tricky. As a result, "a man really writes for an audience of about ten persons. Of course, if others like it, it is clear gain. But if those ten are satisfied, he is content.[9]

Maybe that James is the archetypal "living philosopher". As a matter of fact, from the standpoint of his technicalities, it is nothing but the everlasting question of authenticity that comes, again and again, to be systematically debated. And, by virtue of the pragmatic method itself, it is the very impact on everyday life of every fact and idea that constitutes the focal point. His question is always: what does this mean from a pragmatic perspective?, i.e., what difference does it make from the perspective of my past and future actions? *How does every single moment of my personal existence contribute to the harmonious life of the universe?* is less a conceptual question than a vital one for James. When, in May 1895, he asks "Is Life Worth Living?"[10], his answer is "Be not afraid of life." To believe that life is worth living will *create* the conditions of possibility of its worthiness. We are after all in an open universe in which what matter are "things" in the making as they are immediately apprehended and, among them, the cosmic reconciliation is pristine. We have underlined the importance of the archeo-theoretical axis in speculative philosophy. James' inquiries were directed toward the actual *experience* of the ultimate: to *know* is not simply to speculate in one's corner on the cosmical whereabouts, it is to personally—emotionally— grasp the ultimate mystery of things, to actualize the "pure experience" in which the individual's own life is connected with the Totality. To achieve this goal, all possible path may be—have to be—exploited, including the experimental use of intoxicants. Significantly enough, James argues, in his *Pragmatism*, that the history of philosophy can be interpreted as a conflict of "human temperaments" (P11sq.) or—even better—as a conflict of "personal flavors" (P24sq.):

> Not only Walt Whitman could write "who touches this book touches a man." The books of all the great philosophers are like so many men. Our sense of an essential personal flavor in each one of them, typical but indescribable, is the finest fruit of our accomplished philosophic education. What the system pretends to be is a picture of the great universe of God. What it is—and oh so flagrantly!—is the revelation of how intensely odd the personal flavor of some fellow creature is.

The use of analogies coming from the sense of smell is a very powerful way of pointing at someone's intimate experience, as Gregory the Great, the first monk to become Pope, understood. Anyway, as the *Pluralistic Universe* will say later: a philosophy is nothing else but the expression of a "man's intimate character". Let us notice by the way that Jung has obviously followed James' hint with his "psychological typing."[11]

James' experimental interest in "human immortality" (see his text of 1898) offers a good transition with Whitehead. According to the British philosopher, indeed, his philosophy of organism is neutral on the matter and the question has to be settled by *evidences*.[12] Now, Whitehead has a completely different "philosophical temperament" than his American colleague: James is an extrovert who has coined technicalities directly out of his existential commitment; Whitehead is far more introvert, and so are (so to speak) his technicalities. His thoughts are dryer, more systematic (although circumambulative) but they are constantly referring to the immediate enjoyments of immediate fact. That direct acquaintance with fact—the "immediacy of existence" or "living immediacy"—is the necessary starting point of speculation, as the "reformed subjectivist principle" testifies.[13] Each individual act of immediate self-enjoyment is an "occasion of experience", i.e., an "actual entity". From there he proceeds to weave his entire cosmology.

The philosopher-expert

Whereas it can be said that writing is accidental for the living philosopher, the philosopher-expert is, by far, more inclined to rigidify a system and, from there, to *systematically* attack all the positions that are incompatible with his/her standpoint. *Contradiction* is the main word here: there is a war to be won against all non-repentant philosophers (understood as "experts" as well, of course) and the polemist does not even mind about contradicting his/her own previous statements, provided that it temporarily serves the debate (all the more so since the most secure position is the ever-fluctuating one: the intellectual terrorist is never where s/he is expected to be). *Ad hominem* arguments are especially cherished, since the destruction of the enemy's position is vital. There is no communication possible with the expert because there is no respect of the interlocutor: only contempt. We do not see sincere fights by someone committed to the common good, but just a personal crusade, in which one's own internal despondency has been turned against the world. The polemist, actually struggling within his/her own cobweb, gives a cosmic (paranoid) meaning to it. Pharaonical genealogies

---

9. Lucien Price, *Dialogues of A. N. Whitehead, as Recorded by Lucien Price*. Introduction by Sir David Ross, Boston - London, Little, Brown & Company - Max Reinhardt Ltd., 1954, p. 58. In conversation with Eckermann, Gœthe made the same claim.

10. Essay reprinted in *The Will to Believe and Other Essays in Popular Philosophy* (New York, 1897).

11. Carl Gustav Jung, *Psychologische Typen*, Zürich, Rascher, 1921.

12. Alfred North Whitehead, *Religion in the Making.* New York, Macmillan, 1926, p. 107.

13. Cf. "Whitehead's Axiomatization of the Contiguism of "Pure Feeling"", *Streams of William James*, Vol. 2, Issue 3, Fall 2000, pp. 9-13.

are highly praised as well: one is necessarily the acting Pharaoh, the one who knows better because of a well-advertised crowning (a Napoleonian self-crowning being a valuable alternative). To continuously settle scores with real or imaginary adversaries disclose a hysterical dimension rarely noticed—even though the possible psychopathological (schizophrenic) foundations of metaphysics are sometimes evoked in certain circles. Anyway, if the concept of authenticity is present, it is an inert idea foreign to the actual quest, which belongs more to craving for social or even political power. The Greeks had a discrete name for that sort of misconduct: immoderation ("hubris"). From the perspective of contemporary debate, the standard characteristics of the "white male"—anxious, hatred, conceited, narrow-minded, savage, transient—apply to the polemist-expert, *whatever her race or his gender*. And it is amazing to see them denouncing dogmatism, patriarchy, conventions, epistemological normativism and the like in a way that is nothing else than dogmatic, patriarchic etc. But who dares to complain?

The critical philosopher

Most philosophers are of an intermediate species. Stretched between the call of authenticity and the necessities of earning one's living, they embody a sort of hybrid, for better and for worse, depending on their temperament. The crux of the matter is here: is it feasible—or even wishable—to make money with the philosophical "knowledge" (if any)? Lecturing, teaching, and publishing necessarily involves frequent conflicts and/or compromises, none of them being of good omen for a healthy speculative praxis. Deleuze used to make reference to the dedication of Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677), who had always refused an academic position, preferring the independence that his own occupation (the polishing of lenses) secured. The decision to relinquish the privacy of one's thinking to make public how one personally tackles the philosophic call should taken *very* seriously. Here is Whitehead's pragmatic answer:

> Philosophy is not a mere collection of noble sentiments. A deluge of such sentiments does more harm than good. Philosophy is at once general and concrete, critical and appreciative of direct intuition. It is not—or, at least, should not be—a ferocious debate between irritable professors. It is a survey of possibilities and their comparison with actualities. In philosophy, the fact, the theory, the alternatives, and the ideal, are weighed together. Its gifts are insight and foresight, and a sense of the worth of life, in short, that sense of importance which nerves all civilized effort. Mankind can flourish in the lower stages of life with merely barbaric flashes of thought. But when civilization culminates, the absence of a coördinating philosophy of life, spread throughout the community, spells decadence, boredom, and the slackening of effort.[14]

[14] Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, New York, Free Press, 1967.

IV

Two recent exemplifications of philosophical expertise are proposed by means of conclusion. They will be quick sketches since such conflicts are after all of no interest. Sometimes, it is simply necessary to dispassionately underline the unexpected ways taken by dogmatism.

The "Sokal case" started in 1996 when the journal *Social Text* published a paper which was supposed to be the risky philosophical speculations of a physicist. But in fact, the paper was one of these *purely objective* scientific experiments aiming at determining precisely the level of scientificity at work in the humanities. The author, after having randomly established a catalogue of abuses of scientific terms in various philosophic literature, proceeded to weave them in a way enigmatic enough to disguise his own purpose. The inevitable conclusion was that the incriminated journal was unbelievably sloppy in its standards and, from that representative sampling, the scientific disaster that *are* the humanities as a whole was implicitly stigmatised. The hoax eventually gave birth to a book, *Intellectual Impostures*, denouncing numerous incursions in the scientific territory of notoriously incompetent "scholars".[15]

However, two simple things should be reminded to the various eminences who have added fuel to the fire. First, the bombshell paper is *itself* an intellectual imposture, and is so in a very perverse way: instead of sending the paper anonymously, or allegedly from one of these Third-World universities that are not scientifically competitive at all (God forbid!), Sokal gave full biographical informations. In the contemporary cultural climate, it is indeed fashionable to hear *respectable* scientists stepping far out of their field of expertise to preach the Truth. All the better if it makes some sense from the perspective of the targeted field, but if it doesn't—the unlucky editor perhaps thought—why not expose the author to the ridicule that he seems more than happy to expose himself to? This is yet another example of the fate of the humanities, that still have to struggle within theoretical boundary conditions stated by "hard core scientists." Second, Sokal's commendable efforts to renounce to everything that is not made of clear logical distinctions are a bit naïve, to say the least. At any rate, there is in these matters a very significant—almost canonical—debate between two of the best *logicians* of last century. Here is an excerpt of Russell's confidences:

> It was Whitehead who was the serpent in this paradise of Mediterranean beauty. He said to me once: "You think the world is what it looks in fine weather at noon day; I think

[15] Alan D. Sokal, "Transgressing the Boundaries. Toward a Transformative Hermeneutics of Quantum Gravity", *Social Text*, Vol. 14, Nos. 1 and 2, 1996, pp. 217sq. A year later that intellectual achievement was "crowned" with the publication of the now famous (on the Old Continent at least): Jean Bricmont and Alan D. Sokal, *Impostures intellectuelles*, Paris, Éditions Odile Jacob, 1997 (Translated as *Fashionable Nonsense: Postmodern Intellectuals' Abuse of Science*, New York, Picador, 1998).

> it is what it seems like in the early morning when one first wakes from deep sleep." I thought this remark horrid, but could not see how to prove that my bias was any better than his. At last he showed me how to apply the technique of mathematical logic to his vague and higgledy-piggledy world, and dress it up in Sunday clothes that the mathematician could view without being shocked.[16]

In the same spirit, let us report the following complementary anecdote: "When Russell was invited to deliver the William James Lectures at Harvard (subsequently published as *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* in 1940), Whitehead, who was by then a professor emeritus at Harvard, was asked to introduce him. "This is my friend, Bertrand Russell", he informed the audience. "Bertie thinks that I am muddleheaded; but then I think that he is simpleminded."[17] For Whitehead, exactness is a fake…

Let us now take a look at Marinoff's *business* of "Philosophical Practice" or "Philosophical Counselling". President of the *American Philosophical Practitioners Association* (APPA), author of *Plato Not Prozac*[18], and invited to the last *World Economic Forum* (!), he is institutionalising the mercantilization of philosophy. It is not enough that philosophy becomes available on the Holy market like any other consumer goods, it has *obviously* to be preserved from people who could claim themselves "practicians" without being entitled to do so by somebody who has entitled himself to deliver "certificates" (or even perhaps "licenses"). Only the philosophers who have proven that they have the *expertise* will be allowed to practice. As if the title of "philosopher" delivered by universities was not in itself crippled by cumbersome socio-ideological contingencies, the process of recognition is thus doubled, which practically means that the "pretender" has to go to the cash desk twice.

But philosophers know—and some even say it—: philosophy *qua* philosophy cannot, properly speaking, be taught, it is first and foremost an act of existential commitment. It is not by chance, or because of a persistent mood, that Socrates condemned the Sophists, but in the name of the philosophical ideal itself. The reader remembers that these individuals were billing the Athenians who could afford their services to teach them the art of persuasion. Expertise and bills in a private atmosphere: mercantilization is the word. Now, this does not imply, by any means, that philosophers should remain foreign to the sufferings of their fellow human beings, but that the road paved by an institution like the APPA leads right to a materialistic hell. The conditions of possibility of a practice respectful of the philosophical ideal can be boiled down to two (the question of the therapeutic pretences of philosophy cannot be treated here): philanthropy and publicity. Since it is the case that, on the one hand, the existential commitment in the philosophical dialogue (not talking about the commitment to the actual process of change) must be met by some form of compensation; and that, on the other hand, compensation cannot be an obstacle to the meeting with the philosopher, the fee has to be adapted to the "visitor" (Achenbach's terminology[19]), and this can be made very straightforward within a public structure. To put it yet in another way: the money issue cannot be an obstacle either for the philosopher who does not feel like renouncing to his/her principles or for the visitor whose finances should not be decisive. A *de facto* non-profit structure (not simply a *de jure* one!) acting as intermediate should allow that amazing feat.

Let us rapidly glance at our argument by way of conclusion. The question raised by Deleuze's wrath is quintessential for the understanding of the past, the present and the future (if any) of philosophy. We have proposed three complementary approaches to tackle it: historical, typological and illustrative. From the perspective of the historical emergence of philosophy, two axis have been used to depict the cultural atmosphere of the sixth century: the archè-theoria axis and the logos-polis axis. It is through these coordinates that democracy, City-state religion, science and philosophy can be best depicted. Presocratic philosophies were mainly archeologically-oriented; Postsocratics became *fully* aware of the theoretical—i.e., contemplative—requirement of *living* philosophy. *How far is it reasonable to give reasons?* now haunts the philosopher. Wisdom is the mastering of knowledge. Although the Greeks spoke of *hubris*, their culture privileged dialogue; in the case of the Moderns, the dialogue *with* the world is replaced by a discourse *on* the world, sympathetic knowledge gives precedence to a dominating knowledge. From the typological perspective, we perceive the importance of the sheer openness to the other. As Rilke says in his Kappus' letters: *solely* love can allow a true, sympathetic understanding of somebody's prose (and poetry). It is love that allows the infinite respect conditioning any form of dialogue. The power of ideals is—properly speaking—vital. Serene, majestic, sequoia-like souls[20] have shown us the way; may most of us see it… and follow it.

— *Michel Weber = mweber@philosophers.net*

---

16. Russell, Bertrand, *Portraits from Memory and Other Essays*, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1956, p. 40.

17. George Ramsdell Lucas, Jr., *The Rehabilitation of Whitehead. An Analytic and Historical Assessment of Process Philosophy*, Albany, New York, State University of New York Press, 1989, p. 109, reporting the recollections of Paul Grimley Kuntz (cf. the article of the latter in *Process Studies* 17/1, pp. 40-44: "Whitehead the Anglican and Russell the Puritan: The Traditional Origins of Muddleheadedness and Simplemindedness").

18. Louis Marinoff, *Plato Not Prozac. Applying Philosophy to Everyday Problems*, New York, HarperCollins, 1999.

19. Gerd B. Achenbach, *Philosophische Praxis* (Mit Beitr. von Matthias Fischer e. a., Köln, Dinter, 1984) ; Gerd B. Achenbach und Thomas H. Macho, *Das Prinzip Heilung: Medizin, Psychoanalyse, philosophische Praxis* (Köln, Dinter, 1985).

20. John Muir's expression; cf. *Linnie Marsh Wolfe (ed.), John of the Mountains, the Unpublished Journals of John Muir* (1938), p. 436.

Transactions of the C. S. Peirce Society

A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy

Frederic Harold Young, author of *The Philosophy of Henry James, Sr.* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1951), William's father, established the Charles S. Peirce Society in 1946. Its journal was founded in 1965, *Transactions of the C. S. Peirce Society, A Quarterly Journal in American Philosophy.* Edward C. Moore was the Founding Editor.

Transactions is the premier journal specializing in the history of American philosophy. Although named after the founder of American pragmatism, all types of American thought are covered, from the colonial period until the recent past. All books published in the field are discussed in essay reviews.

The Editors of this quarterly journal in American philosophy are Peter H. Hare, Richard S. Robin, and Randall P. Dipert.

Membership/Subscription Rates

Special*	$20
Individual	$35
Institution	$60
Sustaining	$100

* Special Rate:
Students/Retired/Unemployed

Postage Outside USA
Surface Mail: $5 Air Mail: $25
(USA postage included in Rate above)

Back volumes available upon request.

Transactions of the C. S. Peirce Society
SUNY-Buffalo, Philosophy Department
135 Park Hall
Buffalo, New York 14260

fax: 716-645-6139
e-mail: phhare@acsu.buffalo.edu
http://wings.buffalo.edu/philosophy/

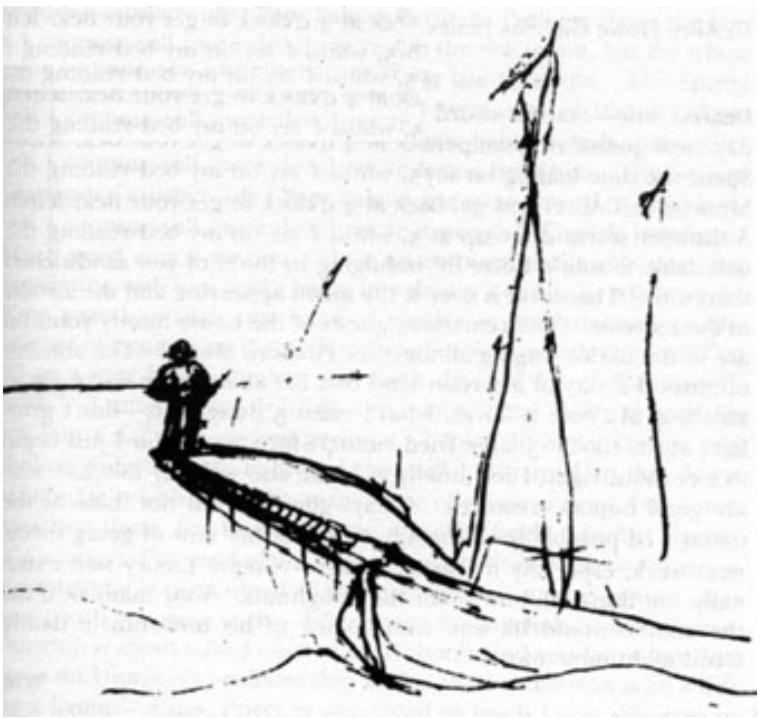
William James in D.H. Lawrence

"How infinitely far away, now, seemed *Jane Eyre* and George Eliot. These had marked the beginning. He smiled as he traced the graph onwards, plotting the points with Carlyle and Ruskin, Schopenhauer and Darwin and Huxley, Omar Khayyam, the Russians, Ibsen and Balzac; then Guy de Maupassant and *Madame Bovary.* They had parted in the midst of *Madame Bovary.* Since then had come only Nietzsche and William James."

—from III, in "A Modern Lover" by D.H. Lawrence, January 1910; *The Complete Short Stories, Volume On*e (Penguin, 1976), p. 6

Welcome, New Library!

Streams of William James is now available at the Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.



"Fishing Boat"

by William James (August 28, 1879)

2000-1 Essay Competition

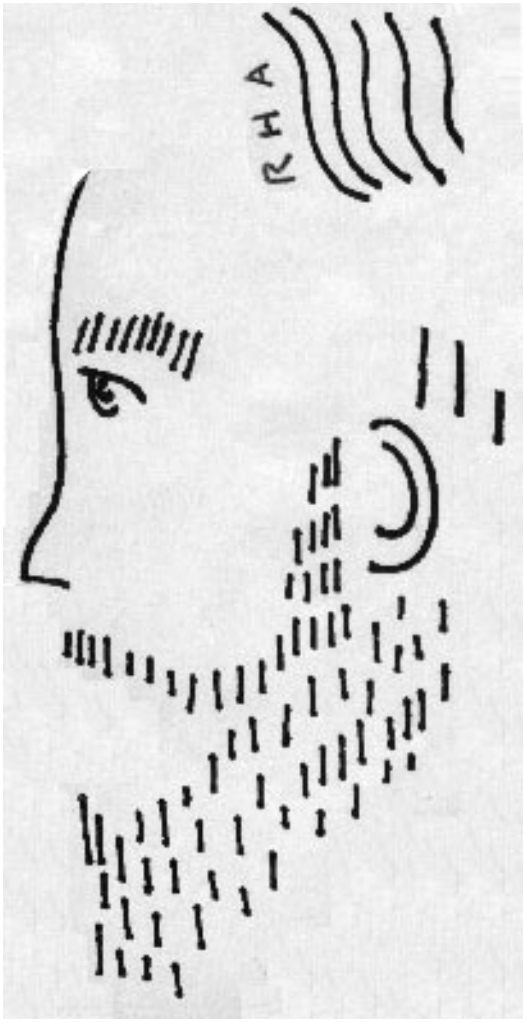
The William James Society is proud to announce its first student essay contest for the best essay concerning the work of William James at the following levels: high school, undergraduate, and graduate study for the 2000-1 year. A $100 cash prize is available at each level to the author of the paper considered of highest quality by the Advisory Board of the William James Society. Also, the top papers will appear in a future issue of the *Streams of William James*. To submit an article for consideration, please follow these steps:

1) Send an electronic copy of your article in Microsoft Word format as an attached file to the editor, using the CC option to send a copy back to yourself for inherent copyright protection.

2) In the e-mail body, explain for whom the essay was originally written, class level, and other pertinent information, including whether it has since been adapted for this submission.

Maximum word length: 4500.

Deadline: May 15, 2001.



Membership Information

Note: *This is the first issue of Volume Three.*

Membership Renewal:
Basic membership is
$15/1 year; $25/2 years for an address in the USA;
$20/1 year; $30/2 years for an address outside USA.

New members who want Volumes 1 and 2: Please add $25 (in USA) or $30 (outside USA) to your check for these issues.

Higher Levels of Support are:
Supporting Star - $75 or more
Friend of William - $150 or more
Beacon Helper - $250 or more

Note: Contributions to William James Society are not tax-deductible at this time. Higher levels of support will be acknowledged, unless requested otherwise, in the final issue of Volume 3, and help to defray operating costs and promotional programs.

To join, please address a check to:
William James Society

Please send the check to:
William James Society
c/o Randall Albright
423 Marlborough Street
Boston, MA 02115

Summer 2001 Deadline:
Please submit contributions as soon as possible for the Summer issue: Vol. 3, # 2. Tentative deadline to *finalize copy* is June 15, 2001. Indicate if you would like your work to be put through a standard peer-review process.

Constitution Ratification and Election of Officers:
We ask that all members (excluding libraries) vote to ratify the proposed constitution for the Society as well as vote for the proposed officers.